

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES

Office of the Director



***Can Juvenile Incarceration and Juvenile Crime be
Reduced Simultaneously?***

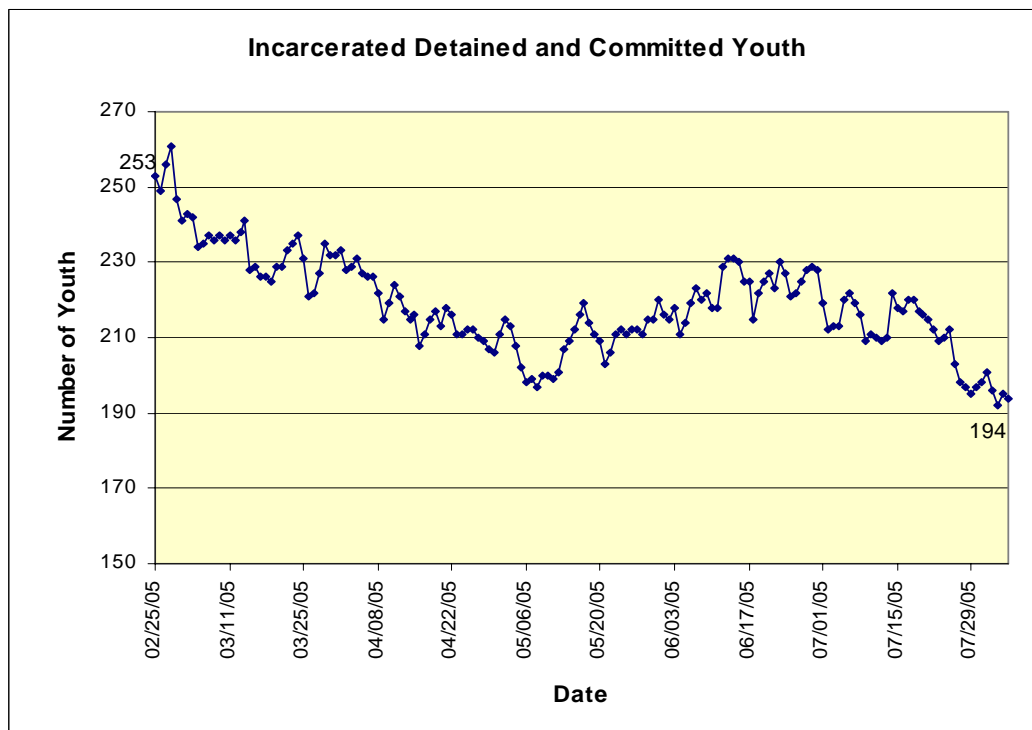
**A Comparison of Crime, Victimization and
Juvenile Incarceration 2004 vs. 2005**

Introduction

As stakeholders in the District's juvenile justice system continue to strive to place youth in the least restrictive environment *consistent with public safety*, we must constantly monitor the impact of these efforts on public safety. An analysis of arrest, victimization and incarceration data for the first six months of 2005 reveals that the system's successful efforts to reduce the unnecessary use of incarceration have corresponded with substantial declines in juvenile arrests, homicides *of* juveniles and homicides *by* juveniles over the first six months of 2005 vs. the first six months of 2004.

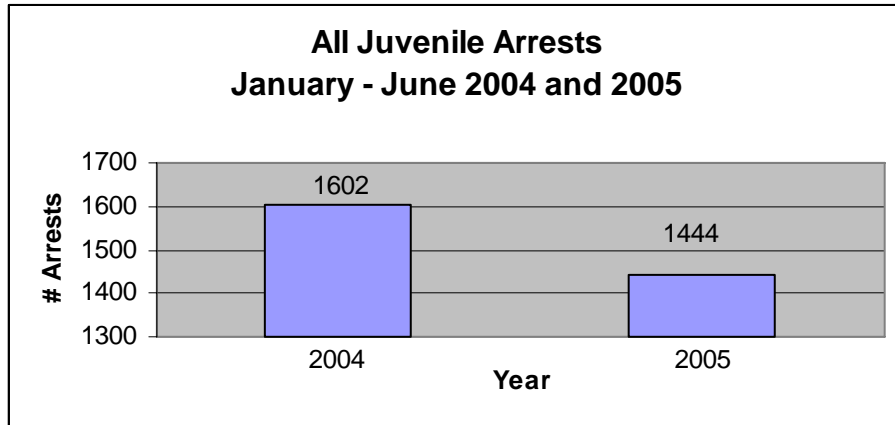
Incarceration declines by 23%

Since February 25th, the size of the total incarcerated youth population has decreased 23% from 253 to 194 (8/4/05). During this time, the committed population at Oak Hill has decreased significantly from 120 to 72 (a 40% decline) while the detained population at both Oak Hill and YSC has decreased by 9%. This decline in the incarcerated population has helped alleviate the recent serious overcrowding and some associated problems at Oak Hill.



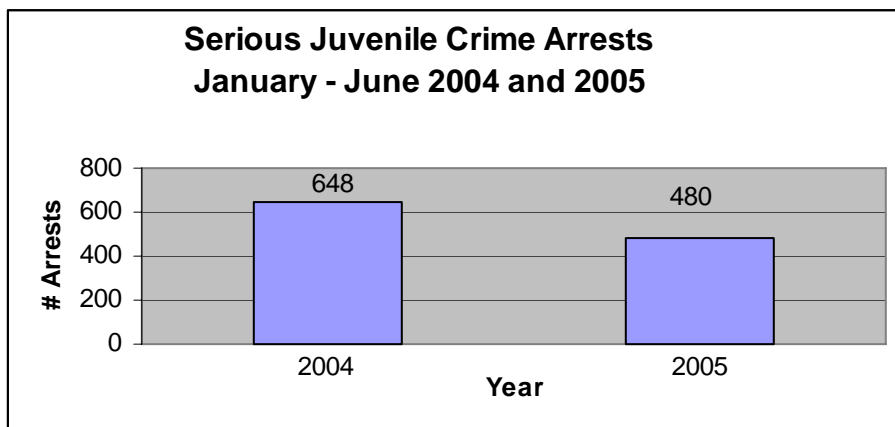
Juvenile crime falling

Not only has this decrease in incarceration not corresponded with an increase in juvenile crime, as some might have predicted, but juvenile crime has dropped significantly overall and most significantly in the more serious crime categories. During the first six months of 2005 there were 10% fewer juvenile arrests¹ than during the first six months of 2004. From January to June, 2004 a total of 1,602 youth were arrested for all crimes while during the same six months of 2005, the number decreased to 1,444.



One-quarter less serious juvenile crime

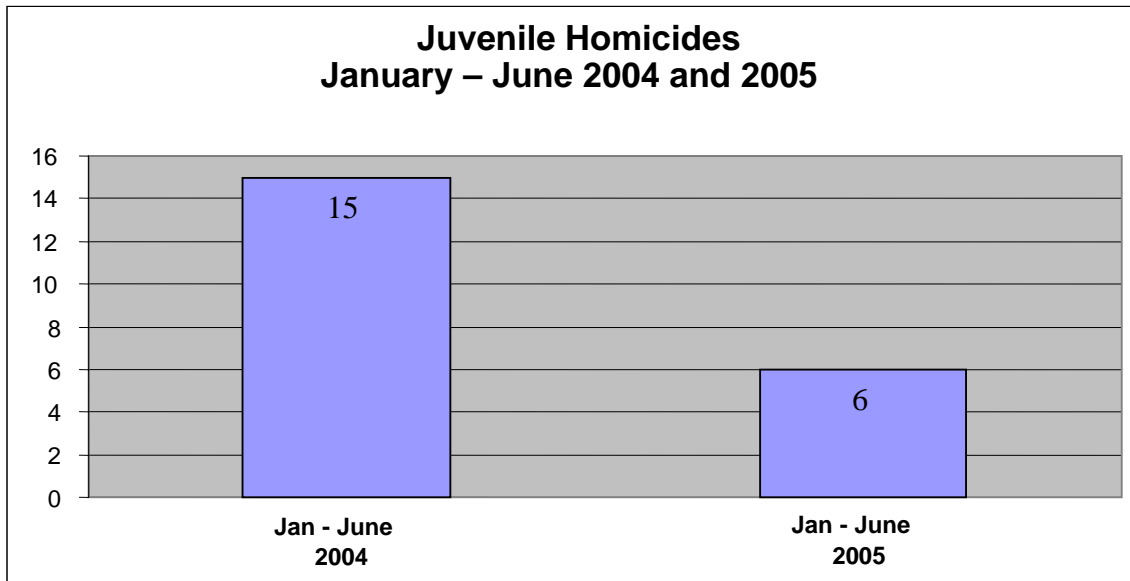
In 2005, there were 26% fewer arrests of juveniles for *serious* crimes (homicide, forcible rape, assault with a deadly weapon, robbery, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson). Between January and June, 2005 there were 480 arrests of juveniles for serious crimes. Over the same time period in 2004 there were 648 juvenile arrests for serious crimes.



¹ The source for all arrest data is the Metropolitan Police Department.

60% fewer juvenile homicide victims - 50% fewer juvenile homicide arrests

In the first half of 2005 there were fewer young victims of homicide and fewer young offenders. The number of youth homicide victims fell by more than half. Fifteen (15) youth were the victims of homicide in the first half of 2004, while in 2005 the number was six (6), a 60% decline.



During the first half of 2004, four (4) youth were charged with murder. Over the same time period in 2005, two (2) youth were charged with murder, a 50% reduction.



These parallel declines in juvenile crime and the number of youth incarcerated are consistent with experiences in similar jurisdictions around the country. For example, in

Chicago, IL, there was a significant decline in the average detention population over the period of 1994 to 2002. During this same time period juvenile prosecutions declined from a high of 19,000 in 1996 to 8,600 in 2002. While the reform effort is continuing in the District, it will be important to continue to monitor these outcomes and also strive to improve the types of programs that are offered to youth and their families which can be successful in reducing the likelihood of reoffense.